

S.3001 – FY 2009 Defense Authorization,

Subtitle C—Other Matters

SEC. 2721. INDEPENDENT DESIGN REVIEW OF NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER AND MILITARY HOSPITAL AT FORT BELVOIR.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) Military personnel and their families, as well as veterans and retired military personnel living in the National Capital region, deserve to be treated in world class medical facilities.
- (2) World class medical facilities are defined as incorporating the best practices of the premier private health facilities in the country as well as the collaborative input of military health care professionals into a design that supports the unique needs of military personnel and their families.
- (3) The closure of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and the resulting construction of the National Military Medical Center at the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland, and a new military hospital at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, offer the Department of Defense the opportunity to provide state-of-the-art and world-class medical facilities offering the highest quality of joint service care for members of the Armed Forces and their families.
- (4) Congress has supported a Department of Defense request to expedite the construction of the new facilities at Bethesda and Fort Belvoir in order to provide care in better facilities as quickly as possible.
- (5) The Department of Defense has a responsibility to ensure that the expedited design and construction of such facilities do not result in degradation of the quality standards required for world class facilities.

(b) **INDEPENDENT DESIGN REVIEW.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT OF DESIGN REVIEW PANEL.**—The Secretary of Defense shall establish a panel consisting of medical facility design experts, military healthcare professionals, representatives of premier health care facilities in the United States, and patient representatives—

(A) to review design plans for the National Military Medical Center and the new military hospital at Fort Belvoir; and

(B) to advise the Secretary regarding whether the design, in the view of the panel, will achieve the goal of providing world-class medical facilities; and

(2) **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO DESIGN PLAN.**— If the panel determines that the design plans will not meet such goal, the panel shall make recommendations for changes to those plans to ensure the construction of world-class medical facilities.

(3) **REPORT.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the panel shall submit to the Secretary of Defense a report on the findings and recommendations of the panel to address any deficiencies in the conceptual design plans.

(4) **ASSESSMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS.**—Not later than 30 days after submission of the report under paragraph (3), the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report including—

(A) an assessment by the Secretary of the findings and recommendations of the panel; and

(B) the plans of the Secretary for addressing such findings and recommendations.

(c) **COST ESTIMATE.**—

(1) **PREPARATION.**—The Department of Defense shall prepare a cost estimate of the total cost to be incurred by the United States to close Walter Reed Army Medical Center, design and construct replacement facilities at the National Naval Medical Center and Fort Belvoir, and relocate operations to the replacement facilities.

(2) **SUBMISSION.**—The Secretary of Defense shall submit the resulting cost estimate to the congressional defense committees as soon as possible, but in no case later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) **MILESTONE SCHEDULE.**—

(1) **PREPARATION.**—The Secretary of Defense shall prepare a complete milestone schedule for the closure of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the design and construction of replacement facilities at the National Naval Medical Center and Fort Belvoir, and the relocation of operations to the replacement facilities. The schedule shall include a detailed plan regarding how the Department of Defense will carry out the transition of operations between Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the replacement facilities.

(2) **SUBMISSION.**—The Secretary of Defense shall submit the resulting milestone schedule and transition plan to the congressional defense committees as soon as possible, but in no case later than 45 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.